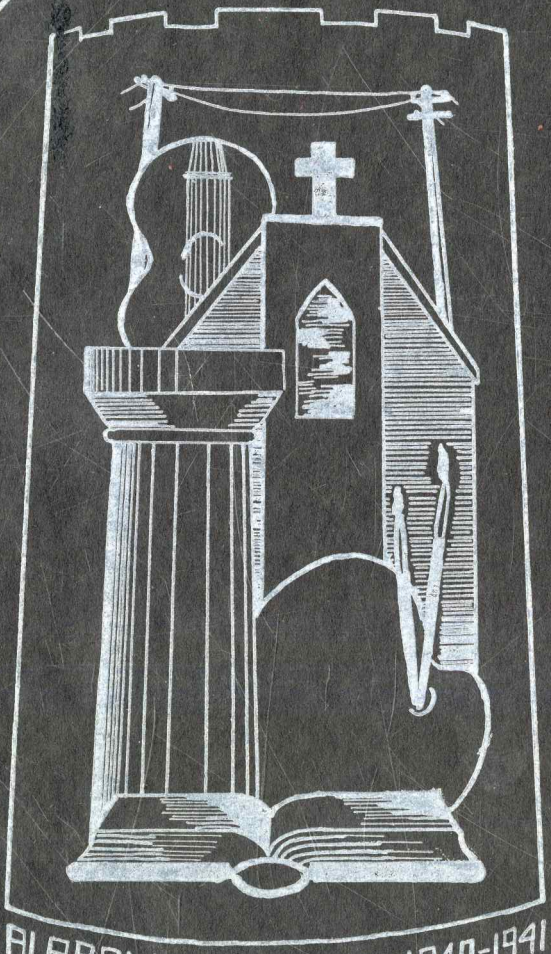
the TOWER



ALABAMA COLLEGE 1940-1941

THE TOWER

Volume 10 January, 1941 No. 1

ALABAMA COLLEGE

MONTEVALLO, ALABAMA

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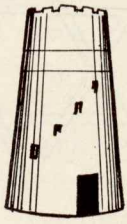
Presenting . . .



HERE IS the *Tower* of 1941. On the cover is the composite picture of its real construction. The bricks were molded by students from the materials which lay all about them—of art, religion, music, and literature. Taken still hot from the furnace of the present, these stones were glazed and polished with myriad patterns and colors. At last the editors took the finished products and built with them the *Tower.*

With what esteem this structure will be regarded remains to be seen. What criticism the technique of its construction and the value of its material will evoke will be eagerly awaited by all the laborers involved.

In this editorial we give you none of our pre-conceived opinions of its structure. We omit purposely any comments that will influence the reaction of those who look upon it. Instead, we say, here is a structure of the thoughts of college students. Here is a product of what they see and know and believe. Here is the *Tower* of 1941.

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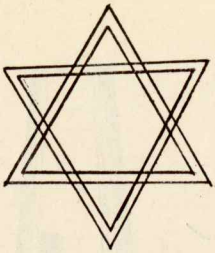
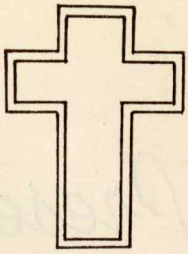
Senior—Helen Harris
Junior—Carolyn Rowe, Martha McRae
Sophomore—Dorothy Watson, Jeanne Espy



5701

1941



GAY BITS of multi-colored confetti are strewn about, vivid streamers fall across the dancers, and rainbow-hued balloons float languidly down, settling on the Country Club dance floor. Horns blare forth and rattlers shake in holiday rhythm. Festive party caps atop heads of the Country Club set sway to the music of the Negro orchestra. All this in tribute to the year now in its last five minutes on earth.

I have endured this blasphemy as long as I can, and I pull away from my partner. Pushing through my friends, I find my way to the door, and at last step out upon the veranda overlooking the darkened golf-course.

I feel the real physical pain that comes to one who is utterly alone and apart. I cannot dance with my friends in tribute to the dying year for it is already dead for me. Memories of Yom Kippur, that most sacred of holy days, the Jewish New Year, return to me and even the blatant orchestra ceases to matter. The soft organ music plays on in my nostalgia and gently stops. The Rabbi rises, his face lined with the cares of generations of Judaism, and looking upon his congregation, speaks. The whole Synagogue is still and his voice sonorous and mellow hallows the New Year, Yom Kippur, solemnest of all Jewish days, old as time immemorial, and unchanged for five thousand years. I see the faces of my racial brothers bright with the hopes of the New Year that brings to them new life. Here no empty gaiety but reverence for the dead past and the dignity of quiet hope for the future ready to emerge from the womb of the present.

From inside a loud voice shouts a toast to the dying year and with the sound of clinking glasses I know that my friends are paying final noisy tribute in strong drink. Suddenly all is silent and from the heart of the town a great bell begins to strike the hour away. The same voice toasts the New Year and resignedly I step inside. The glasses are raised but the room is filled only with the resounding clamor of the bells. Upon the faces of the merry-makers is an expression of reverent and awed anticipation—an expression I have seen before. Someone thrusts a glass into my hands and as the sound of the last stroke is no more I, too, drink to the New Year. I raise wet eyes to meet the eyes of my friends and my voice to join in "Auld Lang Syne." 5701 merges into 1941, and a New Year is born.

—*Mary Sterne,* '41

When I was little, God lived in a cloud castle.
There were sky blue windows and a thousand candles
And He ate the cheese-cake moon for dinner.

When I was older, He moved without leaving any address,
But I kept watching for Him—I was certain He'd be back.
He hasn't come yet—I've hung a "For Rent" sign
in one blue-sky window
And I've begun to wonder if He ever lived there at all?

Did I make God up in my imagination
The way I created His house and lights and food?
Then why can't I call Him back? Where did He go?

Why won't He fit my ideas and mood?
How do I know I'm not the product of some child imagination
Which, on growing up, forgets me and lets me die?
Where would I go? What would I be? What am I?

—*Jeanne Espy,* '43

FAMILY *Session*

OR

Sir William, the Doomed

Little Brother: Thank thee Lord for this good food Amen pass the p'taters.

Father: You will kindly wait, young sir, 'til it comes your turn to be served.

Sister: Ah, Mother, just listen to him.

Mother: Now, Billy dear, don't hurry so.

Grandma: When I was your age, little boys who couldn't behave were sent away from the table.

(*Dead silence as the smoke of the initial guns clears away and the doomed one with a napkin for a shield waits for the battle to begin again. It does.*)

Sister: Mother, he said "p'taters." Make him say "po-ta-toes." He talks just like those trashy little Kinnedy children up the alley.

Grandma: Yes, indeed; and that's because he associates with them so much. I tell you, if he were a child of mine, I'd see to it that he never went anywhere near them.

Mother: Of course, Billy is not to go to their house to play, but I can't order them out of our yard as long as they behave nicely. Besides, I do feel sorry for them. Their poor mother takes in washing while their father drinks up all the money she makes.

Grandma: Yes, it's a pity, but just the same, I wouldn't let a child of mine associate with that kind of trash unless, of course, you *want* the neighbors to talk.

Sister: Mother, make Billy stop cramming his food down in such a hurry. He takes the hugest bites!

Mother: Billy, you must eat slowly, dear.

Father: Yes, indeed. You'll be sorry if you don't. Some day you'll end up in a hospital with stomach trouble, and you'll have to live on liquids alone for months and months.

Grandma: Look at those filthy hands—and that face! I don't believe he ever washes them before he comes to a meal. And he never does comb his hair. I think he just *tries* to look like the Kinnedys.

Sister: Mother, make him pull in his elbows and sit up straight.

Mother: Billy, you must sit up straight. How would it look if all of us sat slumped over our plates the way you do?

(*They all slump to impress him.*)

Father: (*Coming out of his leap-frog position and continuing Mother's lecture.*) Yes, indeed, you must grow straight and tall like the little pine trees. Did I ever tell you the story of the little pine trees? (*He has many times over, but a good story bears repetition, so he repeats.*)—etc., etc. So you see the little straight pine tree grew into a big straight pine which everyone admired, while the little crooked pine tree always remained little and bent and ugly. (*A long pause until Father gathers sufficient reinforcements to attack again.*)

Father: (*Really bearing down this time.*) I've just happened to think—I found my best claw hammer in the hedge by the garage this afternoon and I think I know who left it there!

Sister: I can't find my paint-set anywhere, and I just know he's had it.

Grandma: I've never seen such a careless child. Why, when I was his age——

Mother: (*Breaking in*) Billy, dear, do turn down the radio. Isn't that program nearly over? I do wish you would listen to something besides "Gangbusters."

Little Brother: Yes'm—Pass the p'taters.

—*Dorothy Watson, '43*

BROTHERHOOD

We are so full of selfish thoughts,
We have no time for others.
We think forever of ourselves
And yet—we call men brothers.

—*Grace Lowry, '41*

TOGETHER

By VIOLET BELCHER, '43

THE OLD MAN trudged along the dusky street. He went slowly as if his every step required great effort. His face was haggard, but his eyes had a soft light in them. He was thinking of times long past. Here was the park where he and Maria used to come and sit in the late summer afternoons and talk. He would never forget those talks they had had about their life together. They were very young then and did not know what life meant. They thought it was all birds and trees and flowers—and parks where they could sit together.

Maria probably still thought that life was birds and trees and flowers, the old man thought, for her life was very different from his. He supposed she was as happy now as they had been then. She did not have to trudge the streets and try to find a little work here and there to buy food to fill that empty space that was so hard to keep filled.

He hoped she was still happy, as they had been then. Suddenly he realized that he wanted desperately to see her. If only he could get to Brackton, they might let him see her. She might not want to see him again, but maybe she did. Maybe she did want to see him! His feet started moving a little faster. He suddenly felt like walking all the way to Brackton. . . .

Miss Simpkins was reporting to Doctor Bronson.

"Miss Palladio died an hour ago, Doctor Bronson," she said.

"Bring me the case history, please," said the doctor.

As soon as she brought the records, Doctor Bronson dismissed her and settled down to study this case. It had been a peculiar case, and Maria had been here for such a long time. She had seemed quite content to sit calmly in her room and gaze out the window. She never spoke of anything except the birds, or the trees, or the flowers—or Michael. Only this morning when the doctor had gone into her room she had said, "Michael, meet me under the big oak in the park this afternoon."

The doctor had said, "All right," and left, for he knew she thought he was Michael.

But he must stop thinking of this and go on with his work. Doctors must not have personal interests in cases. Sometimes he thought he was not meant to be a doctor.

As he glanced at the papers in his hand, he saw on the top sheet:

CASE HISTORY OF MARIA PALLADIO

Date of Entrance: *October* 29, 1918
Disease: *Dementia Praecox*
Date of Departure or Death: *September* 21, 1939
Then as he turned to the last sheet he saw:
Manner of Death: *peaceful, calm*
and written in Miss Simpkins' handwriting on a small piece of paper pinned underneath:
She was smiling and saying over and over, "Michael, we'll be happy now, I know."

As he finished reading this, there was a loud knock at the door, and a large dirty man came in. The doctor smiled faintly and said, "Sit down, Bill."

"No, I can't, Doc," said the man. "I've got to be gettin' that load of stuff on down the line. My truck is late, now. I've got a man outside in my truck that I wish you'd see about."

"What is wrong with him?" asked Doctor Bronson.

"Nothing, or rather I guess it's nothing. I picked him up way back up the road. He's been riding with me for about an hour. He said he was on his way here. A few minutes after he got in with me, he went to sleep. When I tried to wake him up, I couldn't. He's not asleep; he's dead!"

"Dead!" exclaimed the doctor. "Then you had better take him into town to the morgue if you don't know who he is. This is not where he belongs."

"I thought maybe he was one of your patients. He looked kinda funny, and said he was headed here. He said his name was Michael. The last name was a long one—I don't remember what it was. Sorta foreign-sounding."

"Oh," said the doctor quietly, "bring him in. I suppose he does belong here, after all."

IDEAL

Might I with my bigoted and narrow views
Awake and feel
And pay my dues
And do my part
Toward my ideal

With
A soul to seek beauty
A wish to do good
A heart to know love.
Oh God! if I could!

—*Sara Harris, '42*

MORNING MISCHIEF

The Gold God was out early at dawn,
But he must have hurried away,
For this morning I found
A molten pool of shining liquid sun-ore
Spilled from the vial
From which he takes his fluid
And tips his sun-shafts as he shoots them into the air.

One small light-arrow had pierced a drop of water
And broken itself into bits of colored ripples;
One had crumpled against a cloud and fallen to earth
Silently, in a mist of sorrow.
One was winking in and out among the leaves of a tree.
One sulky beam was steadily beating its way down toward
the ground,
Glaring fiercely at all it saw.

The Gold God had swiftly, deftly hurled his
Arrows of gold into the air,
And now sat on his gleaming throne
And laughed and shouted at what they did.

—*Mary Grace Orr, '42*

Lost and FOUND

By LAURA WATSON, '44

LITTLE JOE was lost. There was no use trying to hide the fact when it was as plain as the red cap on his kinky black head. He peered wide-eyed through the Saturday afternoon crowd trying to catch a glimpse of the familiar gingham dress — his mammy's "town" dress. He looked hopefully at every parked wagon for old Mose, the flop-eared mule. He prayed for a sight of his pappy's faded blue overalls with the huge gray patch sewed on a spot directly in line with Little Joe's eye-level. But it was no good—they simply could not be found.

Discouraged, Little Joe seated himself on the street curb and propped his chin in his hands. Maybe if he just sat there long enough, they would pass by. Anyway, he had made up his mind not to get scared. Hadn't Big Joe, his pappy, told him more than once, "Ain't none of my chilluns gonna holler when they gets hurt. Dat's de way no 'count niggers and po' white trash do."

Guiltily, Little Joe blinked—but a moment too late to prevent two large drops from glistening on his dark cheeks. How, oh how, he wondered, had he lost track of Mammy and Pappy and the rest of the family?

He was sure it hadn't been the mechanical cow in the grocery window. Of course, he *did* stop to watch its head turn from one side to the other because it looked so much like old Bessie at home, but Mammy and the others had been right there with him. Perhaps he shouldn't have allowed the big red ball in Kress' window, the electric sign in the drug store, or the radio in front of the big furniture place to lure him down the street, but how could he have helped it? He came to town only once in a long, long time. He just *had* to see everything. Mammy had warned him about that—and how he

wished now he had minded her. Two more tears followed wet paths down his face.

His despair was interrupted by a firm touch on his shoulder.

"Get up there," he heard, and looking up he saw a tremendous blue form above him. A policeman!

"You'll get run over," the voice continued. It was not unkindly, but to Little Joe it seemed the voice of doom. Frightened, he jumped up and darted down the street, dodging the people in his way.

He ran until his breath came in gasps and his short legs ached with the effort. When he could run no longer, he stopped just inside the entrance to a store and peeped like a scared rabbit around the edge of the display window. No policeman was in sight!

Little Joe drew in his breath, and then let it out in tears. He could keep them behind the dam no longer. He wanted his mammy! Rubbing his eyes with his fingers, he began walking blindly and wearily. Nobody noticed the crying darky, or if they did, cared too little to help him. Little Joe himself had ceased to think about anything at all. The longing for Mammy welled up inside of him and spilled over in salty sobs. Forgotten was his pappy's boast about the bravery of his "chillun"; gone was the delight of being in town on Saturday; nothing was left but the desire to see his "folks" again. Even the brightly sparkling jewels in the jewelry window he was passing failed to catch his attention with their spotlighted brilliance. His mind was on just one thing—Mammy!

Suddenly a man dashed out of the jewelry store and collided heavily with the tear-blinded Little Joe. There was a grunt of surprise, then a shower of oaths as both Little Joe and the man sprawled on the pavement. Before the man could get to his feet the door of the jewelry store opened and the floor walker sailed out, followed by the owner and a host of clerks. They all seemed to pounce at once on the man who, by this time, was almost on his feet.

Little Joe turned to run but found himself blocked by a crowd gathering to investigate the disturbance. He had almost succeeded in ducking between two women, when he was caught. His captor turned him around and began talking to him. Little Joe was afraid to look at the "white gentleman" who held him, but his fear was finally penetrated by the fact that that he wasn't being scolded but praised. This had just dimly seeped through when a lovely sound,

far more beautiful than anything he had ever heard before, drowned out everything else in his mind. A well-known voice said,

"Lawdy, dat's Little Joe!"

"Mammy!" Little Joe raised his head and flew in the direction of the voice.

He was received by large enfolding arms and, sniffling, he happily snuggled up against the comforting body. He was aware that the white gentleman was talking to Mammy and he heard something about "valuable diamond," "thief," and "reward you," but Little Joe didn't care about that. He already had what he wanted. He had found his folks!

A VESPER SONG

A smoky, dusty haze hangs halfway o'er the hills
Turning the last faint rose of sunset to a pale and
shadowed purple.
The day-dead hills are graying blue above the dust
And sinking down to dream.

The day has gone once more
To whence it came
Leaving ashes dead and gray
Within the cup of earth.

A star gleams bright above the moon.
The day is dead.
Long live the night.

—*Lucile Adair Argo,* '42

MEDITATION

While sitting in a shady nook,
I tossed a pebble in the brook
And watched the circles wide expand
Until they reached and kissed the land.

Reflecting on the scene below,
My meditation bade me know
That so, one thought expressed to ten
May reach a hundred thousand men.

—*Grace Lowry,* '41

Lines about ..NOTHING

Big foot, grey faced, clown of a man,
Eat burnt bacon and beans from a can.
Go home simpering, go home whining.
Dead is the dog when the day is dying.

* * *

Tall trees droop in the quiet shadows.
Long roads wind where the winds play freely.
Watch for the new moon—
Watch for the soldier—
Watch through the night that needs not watching;
Watch for the man with the long battered drum shell,
New white sticks, and a soft sounding sea shell.
Call to him!
Stop him!
Stop time say rather.

* * *

Hark to the roar of a million June bugs,
Crying at midday with heat and oppression;
Listen to the skins split!
Listen to the thunder!
Listen to the song of one above all of them,
Singing in the heat and the afternoon oppression.

* * *

Ho! for the animal enjoyment of solitude,
Loneliness and weariness, man's first fortitude.
Listen for the West Wind crying in the wilderness—
"Come," cry the voices, full of solicitude.
"Come to the wilderness,
"Turn from the whiteman way.
"Lo! the millions of men who before you sought for the happiness
shoes couldn't give them.
"Eat of the fruit of the bread of the wilderness.
"Come! Come! Come!"

Rhythm of the roll of the rhyme—
Time of the time of the time—
War and suffering—
Lord, I'm weary.

* * *

Where are the mists from the land of the evening?
Mists that roll for alleviation—
Ah! the landscape their parting reveals.
Blue hill on blue hill,
Plane upon plane of them.
Delicate outline, infinite shades of them.
How can a sane man keep from adoring them?

* * *

I hold the key to all eternity.
I write verses that don't mean anything,
Jibbering rimes that make folks laugh,
But I hold the key to all eternity.

—*Carolyn Norris,* '42

EMPTINESS

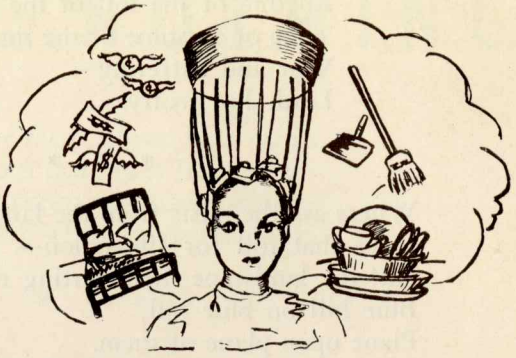
Empty sounds. . . .
The dry crackle of a leaf
Dancing its steps of death
Along a dusty path,
Blown along by a chill wind.

The thud of a heavy stone
As it strikes the soft earth,
Its resonance buried
In the depth of the soil.

The hollow laugh of a woman
Who plays the game of gaiety
With her heart, heavy as a stone,
Her hopes, empty and still.

—*Mary Grace Orr,* '42

DIRTY *Dishes*



By **HELEN NEWTON '44**

MYRTLE stood in the center of a floor greasy from spilled dishwater and worn rough from years of constant use. In the corner of the room a table stacked high with dirty dishes loudly demanded her attention; in another corner stood an old-fashioned churn, full of sour milk, also awaiting consideration. The temperature climbed steadily toward ninety degrees in the shade, racing with the terrific heat of the wood-stove in the third corner of the kitchen.

Myrtle looked down at herself, and saw what she had tried so long to ignore: run-over shoes, a dirty, faded dress, minus a sash or belt—fingernails broken and dirty—hands rough from scrubbing and washing.

She didn't mean to, but suddenly she began to cry. ("Not that anybody will hear me," she thought miserably.) Fred had gone to the field at sunrise with fifteen Negroes, seven of whom she cooked dinner for, every day during the cotton-picking season.

Walking through the house, Myrtle was acutely conscious of unmade beds, unswept floors, dusty furniture. "And what wonderful furniture it is!" she thought hysterically. "It's old and broken down and worn out like I am!"

She fell across one of the cheap iron beds, and two slats slipped out with a noise that sent her head whirling.

Why hadn't she gone crazy, living for fifteen years this hand-to-mouth existence, getting up at four o'clock to slave from morning till night, with never a thing to show for her trouble?

At first Myrtle had struggled to keep her appearance as it had been when she lived in town—when she'd had pretty clothes, good cosmetics, weekly hair-dressing and manicure. What an easy time she had then! But it was just her luck to fall in love with a farmer, and to marry a life of drudgery along with him. She hadn't time to care for her appearance nor money for clothes—and what good

were they to her? Day in, day out, day in, day out, always the same: work, work, work, with never an hour for pleasure.

"Well, I'm through with all this," Myrtle declared aloud. "I'm leaving right now!"

In less than an hour Myrtle had packed her few belongings and had donned her best dress and hat. She stepped before a full-length cracked mirror.

"Good Lord! I'm just thirty-five years old," she thought wildly, "and I look like a broken old woman of fifty!"

Fred had left the key in the car outside; and, throwing her battered suitcase into the back, she climbed up on the high front seat.

What would Fred think? She laughed mirthlessly as she backed out into the road. Her eyes passed over a scraggly flower bed—she'd planted flowers several years, but the chickens always got into them and scratched them up.

Myrtle drove rapidly toward town—at least as rapidly as a Model T Ford can be driven—and mentally counted her money. She had saved a few dollars by selling eggs and butter to the rolling store, enough to buy a new dress and a permanent wave, maybe a manicure. . . .

A few hours later Myrtle looked like a different person! She looked almost as young as she really was, with her permanent wave and gay striped dress.

What would Fred think if she should drive over to the field and tell him she was leaving? Myrtle decided with a grim satisfaction to do just that. She'd show Fred she could look decent! He'd be sorry, all right, when she laughed and told him goodbye for good. Maybe he'd beg her to stay—but she'd laugh harder than ever and go away just the same!

Myrtle hummed an old college song as she cut off the engine and the Ford chugged to a stop in front of the house. She'd see if Fred had come home from the field after dinner—Well! here was a note in the door. Fred must have gone to town in the truck—funny that *he* should be leaving a note, though!

"Dear Myrtle," she read, "my sister Gladys is coming on the 5 o'clock train, had a letter in the morning mail, and have gone to meet her. Fred."

"Good Lord!" gasped Myrtle. "The house has never been in such a mess, and Fred's sister from Connecticut coming!" Dishes not washed—beds not made!

Frantically she opened the door and dashed in. If she worked like mad she'd get through cleaning up before they came home. No

sister Gladys from Connecticut was going to find *her* house in such a fix! She would *have* to wash these dishes. And then maybe she'd have time to make a chocolate cake. Fred was so fond of chocolate cake—Heavens! What did Northerners eat? Well, she could take a chance on fried chicken, and maybe some hot biscuits, Myrtle decided. . . . And thank goodness she'd had intuition enough to get a new dress and this permanent!

Myrtle stepped in front of a small kitchen mirror and winked at her reflection. "Won't Fred be proud of me!" she thought with a glow of complete satisfaction.

The reflection in the mirror winked back knowingly.

—*Helen Newton, '44*

CONQUISTADORES

We call you conquerors.
Out of the East you came with fiery sails in the dawn.
You came to kill, torture and enslave.
Your gaping maws knew no satiety until your victims dwindled,
almost disappeared—
The aftermath of conquest.
Cortez, Pizarro, Balboa, Coronado,
La Salle—All of you "great," "conquistadores."

What *are* conquerers?
The leaders? Or the victims, who died, who lived
To father a new culture, a new civilization
Born from the dust of two—yours and theirs?

Your names are great.
But greater still are they, unknown, forgotten,
Who reared and nourished traces of the old temples,
The old gods,
And mingled them with yours.

Theirs is the greater part, the greater glory.
You destroyed.
They accepted destruction, yes.
They rebuilt.

—*Lucile Adair Argo, '42*

one, two, three, STRETCH!

What is more thrilling than the autobiography of a famous person? Why, the autobiography of a person you know, and that's why the Tower *is especially happy to publish this symposium of the ambitions, joys, pleasures and pains from the lives of—*

the Class of '44

I am a rubber band. Look at me lying here in the waste-basket, hopelessly snapped in two. My work, my usefulness is ended! I'm headed straight for Vulcanizer (a reasonable facsimile of Dante's *Inferno*) where I'll be resurrected to waste away for the mistakes of others, as an—eraser!

You ask why I have to be such a martyr? Well, it's quite a story. Not three weeks ago I was encircling a pile of Freshman autobiographies, a big pile! I was elastically pulled to capacity, but was bearing the strain well—the way Papa Goodyear had taught me to do. But those autobiographies were so full of life that they grew restless, and wiggled! Yes, actually wiggled! Oh, I was so stretched, I felt like a truck tire! And one day they were so lively that I turned loose—I could stand the strain no longer—and bing! I popped into bits and they popped into life.

* * *

The one on top, A. L. B.'s, was family history. "My grandmother had a wandering foot, and at the least provocation would pack her bags in one hand, grasp my mother in the other, and start for Europe. They went all over Europe on a shoestring, living in the most economical hotels and eating the cheapest food. She said that was the only way to see a country. My grandfather was a briliiant, erratic English teacher (no reflection on English teachers in general) —and he usually remained in Canada while Grandmother and Mother roamed at will. . . . Then Mother moved to Puerto Rico where she taught school for several years. On a return trip to Canada, she met my father, a handsome widower from South Carolina. They were introduced in the afternoon; he proposed that night, and

she accepted. . . They were rather strict on my older brothers and sisters. However, succeeding brothers and sisters have worn down their resistance, and so now they are really quite agreeable to live with."

* * *

S. R.'s father was head of the music department of Alabama College at one time. Her autobiography said, "At eight years I began to take music lessons which acquainted me with Calkins Hall. Not being musically inclined, I hated piano lessons. As my teacher came up one wing of the stairs, I hastened down the opposite one, being careful to keep out of her sight. . . The fire escapes were very fascinating to us children, especially after a box of face powder had been emptied down them to make the rides faster. Dr. Peck, whom we all grew to love, painted our many scratches and bruises."

There next came H. N.'s paper. She calls herself the "(Im) Perfect Specimen" and promises a more detailed story when she returns "to the factory for remodeling." She says there's one point in her favor. "I have just one thing in common with the majority of autobiographers—I was born in the country. Whereas, other writers, however, can describe their spectacular rise from the ignorance and superstition of the country to their own smug little places in the sun, I, alas, must stop on *this* side of the elevated plane: the country."

* * *

A banana in the first grade was torture for S. Y. "My mother pushed me off to school one morning with books in one hand and a banana in the other. . . . So the eight o'clock hour found my books, banana and me slowly mounting the steps of the grammar school. I went into the room and put away my shiny books with their smell of fresh new paper and got settled for the day. But where was I to put the banana? The snaggle-toothed little boy across the aisle was eyeing it so that I became painfully embarrassed, and to get rid of the fruit, I pushed it way behind my books in the desk. I did not know when or where to eat a banana and I was overcome with bashfulness. If I had only known the snaggle-toothed boy was envious, not ridiculing me!"

* * *

Art figured greatly in T. H.'s theme. "My most exciting days were spent this summer working with Betty Birmingham at the Birmingham *News,* modeling and sketching clothes and articles in

the local department stores. I want someday to be a fine commercial artist, a designer, or an illustrator."

* * *

My rubbery bits were enjoying these. The next one had ambitions, too. It was A. G. B.'s. "All my life I have cherished an ambition to become a famous novelist. This summer I wrote a short story and sent it to the Birmingham *News*. I waited breathlessly. In about six weeks I got a nice fat letter, and my hopes sank. I opened the envelope and there was my precious manuscript. Neatly corrected, it had a note from Artemus Calloway saying that he was sorry, but he couldn't use my story. . . My chief ambitions are to marry a doctor and have lots of children and to live into the next century."

* * *

There was a story of A. W.'s about her double-promotion. "When the principal told me that I was to be promoted, I burst into tears—for I was leaving my favorite playmate behind—and refused to be consoled until my new teacher gave me a tiny toy dog to play with. I well remember how hard it rained that day, for I was standing on the front steps of the schoolhouse with my raincoat and funny little rainhat on, my book satchel in my hand, when Mother came for me. As she walked up, I announced in my most triumphant voice, 'I'm in the second grade, now!' "

* * *

One Freshman, L. B., I found, spent six months in a hospital when she was six years old. "After my examination was finished, it was necessary to shave my head. My nurse put me on a tall stool and gave me some chewing gum. All the time they were cutting my hair, they kept telling me how pretty my new hair cut was, but, of course, I was never allowed to see a mirror. Since I had to stay there such a long time, the nurses would let me go all over the hospital by myself. I rode up and down in the dumbwaiter. . . I went with the doctors to make their rounds every day. . . When I didn't want to take my afternoon nap, I would stand up in bed and sing till someone came."

* * *

Painting was S. C.'s hobby. She said, "From the very first I have tried to draw ladies (they being necessary to play paper dolls). This effort has been to no avail. I simply never could get lips or eyes balanced, no matter how hard I tried. And at the mention of

slender fingers—well, my paper dolls carried theirs behind their backs! . . . . One day I got some white paper, black paint, and the kid next door, and began a new phase of my hobby—silhouette painting. I was quite proud of my first attempt — a mass of curls and a baby face." And she is painting silhouettes of other Freshmen now. It's a thriving business.

* * *

L. W. didn't play paper dolls. She said, "I had no playmates, so I made up one. This invisible child I called simply 'Mary'. Mary went with me everywhere. When I wanted to play my favorite game of 'Make-Believe', if there were no real children around to play with, I employed 'Mary'."

* * *

There were more autobiographies all around, but the janitor came in and gathered them up and brushed me into this wastebasket. And that's all—except that someday I expect to write an autobiography. I shall call it *Rubber Band to Eraser* or " 'Tis Sad When You Think of My Wasted Life." It might make interesting table talk over a rubber of bridge, no?

No! !

PASTORAL

The piper at the gates of Dawn
Piped a wild and frenzied lay,
Knocked upon the gates of Dawn,
Took a star and went away.

The piper in the sunny noon,
Uncertain, put his pipes aside,
The echoes of his nooning song
Fainter grew, and slowly died.

The piper looked into the night
Across the threshold of the day;
The piper took his pipes again
And, softly piping, went his way.

—*Carolyn Norris, '42*

MORTALITY

I saw death come against his will
And leave him lying cold and still
With staring eyes and ashen cheek
And lips that could no longer speak.

And as I saw him lying so,
The power that only life can know
Revealed itself within my mind
And made me feel that I could find

A way to end this thing called death—
A way to change it into breath;
And so a voice within me said,
"Go, lay your hand upon his head."

I touched his brow and closed my eyes
And as I did, I saw him rise
And break the shackles death had made
And leave his coffin unafraid.

He stood before me straight and tall
As if in answer to my call
To leave his bonded, captive state
To curse the thing that men call fate.

He talked to me of many things
Of ships, and palaces and kings—
Of life and death and land and sea,
And of the bondsmen and the free.

Entranced I stood 'til break of day
And when I looked to where he lay,
My hand no longer touched his head
And still he lay there cold and dead!

—*Grace Lowry,* '41

BOOK REVIEWS

The Beloved Returns, Thomas Mann,
The Alfred Knopf Co., New York, 1940.
Reviewed by HELEN FULLER, '42.

IN OCTOBER, 1816, excitement shatters the usual quiet of Weimar, the home of Goethe and the cultural center of Germany. A throng of curious citizens is milling about before the inn, hoping to catch a glimpse of a famous guest. The word has spread that Charlotte Kestner, whom Goethe loved as a youth and immortalized in his *Sorrows of Young Werther,* has returned. Although Charlotte is now a sixty-three-year-old widow, who has lived a full, happy life of her own, she clearly remembers the Goethe of her youth and has an almost school-girlish longing to see him again.

Before Charlotte can escape from the beleaguered inn to visit her sister who lives in Weimar, several visitors force their way in to see her. The conversations she has with these various Weimar people reveal Charlotte's charming, affable personality. We are amazed at how strangers confide in her, pouring out their troubles to her sympathetic ears. From these conversations we find out a great deal about Goethe, his influence on his associates, and the Germany of his day. Everywhere we feel the overwhelming force of Goethe's personality. While his co-workers' admiration and respect amount almost to worship, and they feel privileged to have helped the genius, yet often they resent having been forced to submerge their personalities, sacrificing themselves to the great one's service. For example, Goethe has selfishly dominated his son's life, but as Goethe's private secretary says, "Great men must think of themselves first."

In a masterly description of Goethe's stream of thought on awakening in the morning, Mann gives us a glimpse into the workings of a genius's mind. We marvel at Goethe's superhuman capacity, and the variety and the breadth of his knowledge of the arts and sciences. His psychology is further revealed as he indulges in self-analysis.

An opinion that this great thinker expressed is especially interesting to us in view of the course of world affairs today. In regard to the Prussian ideal of militarism and nationalism, we find that Goethe himself condemned Germany's "pig-headed craving to be a

unique nation, this national narcissism that wants to make its own stupidity a pattern and power over the rest of the world!" He predicts, "Unhappy folk! They will end in a smash!"

When Charlotte finally meets Goethe at a dinner, he seems rather stiff, even unfriendly, toward her. At their last meeting, however, Charlotte reaches a better understanding of her former sweetheart. Goethe shows that he realizes how he has hurt nearly everyone that he has drawn to him. He compares himself to a candle, his associates to moths. Carrying the comparison further, he points out that he is burning himself down in order to give light. In the end, both he and Charlotte reach a serene resignation to their lots, each having profited from the meeting.

The Beloved Returns helps us to appreciate Goethe the man as well as Goethe the artist. Somehow he seems more real, more human, when he is complaining of his rheumatism than when he is pondering on the universality of art. Mann draws his characters subtly, yet powerfully. Even though most of the important action took place at an earlier time and is reported only indirectly in the characters' conversation and thoughts, the writing does not lack force. The author's substantial style is excellently fitted to his topic. In this revealing character study, Thomas Mann proves that he has the literary stature demanded by his complex subject—the immortal Goethe.

In reading this book, many of us are prone to forget that it was originally written in German. The brilliant style of Mann is translated for us here, as in many other instances, by Mrs. Lowe-Porter, an Englishwoman. To praise Mann's works in English without recognizing Mrs. Lowe-Porter's part in them would be to ignore one of the most skilled translators of contemporary literature.

* * *

How Green Was My Valley, Richard Llewellyn, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1940
Reviewed by YENNA YORK, '41

THROUGH the years novels of many kinds have been written. There have been novels which have had as their purpose the describing of certain localities and the people of these localities. Some have been written to portray unusual characters, others to describe the struggles of one class of people against another. But Richard Llewellyn has combined all of these features, and this year has con-

tributed to the literary world a great novel, *How Green Was My Valley.*

In this book he describes for us very vividly the coal mining region of South Wales, picturing for us the hardships and happinesses of the miners. We are made to feel that we actually know the various members of the Morgan family, including the gentle tyrant of a father, the shrewd and impulsive mother, and the many children of the family. Yet at the same time we are given an idea of the struggles of these coal miners who attempt to organize themselves into labor unions so that through working collectively they may better their conditions. In the struggle between the father and his sons we get a sympathy for the contrasting attitudes toward unionization that were held by the older and younger workers at the time that labor unions began to be important. Mr. Llewellyn so skillfully weaves these various elements together that we are not conscious of any element distracting from the total beauty of the novel.

The style of the story is poignant and charming, for it is told as if Huw, one of the Morgan boys, is in a mood of nostalgia and is recalling the lost golden days of his youth. He is a man in his sixties now, and about to leave the Valley forever. Before leaving, however, he pauses to reflect upon the life which he has spent in the place.

Truly this is no "shallow" or "light" book. Beneath the rather simple story, we find great truths hidden. Although the book describes the Welsh miners, we feel that it has universal meaning. It is indeed comforting and stimulating to find an author today who writes in this manner about these subjects, for it is a relief from the rather blase and sophisticated books we have been receiving in late years. It is inspiring to get this picture of the beauty of the simple life of these people before the slag heap from the mines crept down and destroyed the greenness of the Valley. The pathos of the situation is seasoned with a taste of the salty Welsh humor. Love, excitement, heroism, and sacrifice mingle together.

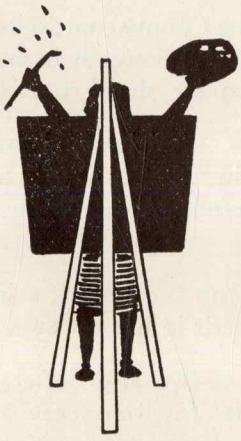
THOUGHTS

Thinking always sets me wondering
Whether life is worth the blundering;
Whether love is worth the worry,
If the bargain's worth the hurry—
And many times, on sorrow's brink,
If the thought is worth the ink.

—*Carolyn Rowe, '42*

THE EDITOR

BUSINESS MANAGER



ART EDITOR

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CURTAIN CALL

Grace Lowry—This Senior Secretarial Science major has hid her light under the proverbial bushel for the last three years. Popular for her charming doggerel—the discovery of her thoughtful, simple poetry is the prize surprise of the year.

Yenna York—Taking time off from her position as faculty member of the Montevallo High School, this Senior Speech major was delighted to review her favorite book. One of the busiest people about, Yenna is already known to *Tower* readers.

Sara Harris—Sincerity and sportsmanship mark this Junior Physical Education major as an ideal person. *Ideal* follows several poems which were popular in the 1939-40 *Tower.*

Laura Watson—The never-to-be-forgotten old Princess in the Freshman play does another extra-special bit of interpretation. Though she is not on the stage, she made Little Joe mighty real.

Helen Newton—A favorite with the audience during the Freshman beauty parade Elite Night, Helen promises to become a favorite creator of real down-to-earth characters. Her Myrtle is disturbingly familiar.

Lucile Argo—One of the indispensable Purple writers of last College Night, Lucile gives the *Tower* more of her strong free verse.

Violet Belcher—Monroe County contributed this red-haired writer to Alabama College in 1939. Since then she has been contributing to the *Tower* poignant, tender, short, short stories.

Carolyn Norris—Artist, musician and creative thinker, Carolyn has been so engrossed in "Status Quo", a play, that she hasn't noticed the change of seasons. A free verse apostle, Carolyn's work is interesting.

Helen Fuller—Always up on the latest in literary effort, Helen proves to be a critic of merit in her review of *The Beloved Returns.*

Mary Grace Orr—An ex-two year Secretarial Science major who decided she could "take it" for four years, Mary Grace has been an asset to the campus in dramatics, creative writing, and Student Government.